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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/722,791	11/25/2003	Paul J. Rudeck	1998-0609.02/US	8608
7590	11/22/2004		EXAMINER	
Kevin D. Martin 8000 S. Federal Way MS 1-525 Boise, ID 83707-0006			NGUYEN, JOSEPH H	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2815	

DATE MAILED: 11/22/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/722,791	RUDECK ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Joseph Nguyen	2815

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

1)  Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 November 2004.

2a)  This action is FINAL.                            2b)  This action is non-final.

3)  Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

4)  Claim(s) 1-6 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) 1 and 2 is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
5)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
6)  Claim(s) 3-6 is/are rejected.  
7)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
8)  Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

9)  The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)  The drawing(s) filed on 25 November 2003 is/are: a)  accepted or b)  objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)  The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)  Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a)  All    b)  Some \* c)  None of:  
1.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2.  Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3.  Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

1)  Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) . . . . .  
2)  Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  
3)  Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 11/25/03. . . . .  
4)  Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date.       .  
5)  Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)  
6)  Other:       .

## DETAILED ACTION

### ***Election/Restrictions***

Applicant's election without traverse of claims 3-6 in the reply filed on 11/01/2004 is acknowledged.

### ***Specification***

The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required. In claim 5, the limitation of "said concentration of silicon atoms remains the same throughout said lower portion of said silicon nitride layer and said concentration of silicon increases throughout said upper portion of said silicon nitride layer" is not previously described in the specification.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 3-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Helm et al.

Regarding claim 3, Helm et al discloses in figure 7 an in process semiconductor device comprising a semiconductor wafer 42, a gate oxide layer 50, and a conductive floating gate layer 52; a silicon nitride layer 54 overlying said floating gate layer 52, said silicon nitride layer having lower surface 56, an upper surface 58 which is exposed, and an enhanced concentration of silicon atoms, wherein said enhanced concentration of silicon atoms has a gradation which increases through said silicon nitride layer from said lower surface to said upper surface.

Regarding claim 4, Helm et al discloses in figure 7 said in process semiconductor device is absent any conductive control gate layer.

Regarding claim 5, as best understood, Helm et al discloses in figure 7 a lower portion 56 of said silicon nitride layer and an upper portion 58 of said silicon nitride layer, wherein said upper portion of said silicon nitride layer comprises all of said silicon nitride layer except said lower portion and said concentration of silicon atoms remains the same throughout said lower portion of said silicon nitride layer and said concentration of silicon atoms increases throughout said upper portion of said silicon nitride layer (col. 5, lines 45-50).

Regarding claim 6, Helm et al discloses in figure 7 a lower portion 56 of said silicon nitride layer and an upper portion 58 of said silicon nitride layer, wherein said upper portion of said silicon nitride layer comprises all of said silicon nitride layer except said lower portion and said concentration of silicon atoms remains the same throughout said lower portion of said silicon nitride layer, and said concentration of said silicon

atoms in said upper portion is higher than said concentration of said silicon atoms is said lower portion (col. 5, lines 45-50).

***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joseph Nguyen whose telephone number is (571) 272-1734. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 7:30 am- 4:30 pm. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tom Thomas can be reached on (571) 272-1664. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306 for regular communications.

JN

November 29, 2004.

  
JEROME JACKSON  
PRIMARY EXAMINER